

and women who have fought along our side and there are American men and women in uniform who are alive today because a lot of those Afghans put their lives on the line.”

At that same hearing, Marine Corps Commandant Gen. Robert Neller also stressed the importance of the program and the need for Congress to extend it. Their view is shared by our senior diplomats.

Ambassador Ryan Crocker, who served in Afghanistan from 2011 to 2012 recently wrote:

Taking care of those who took care of us is not just an act of basic decency; it is also in our national interest. American credibility matters. Abandoning these allies would tarnish our reputation.

Well, I agree. Indeed, I think there is overwhelming bipartisan support in both houses of Congress for extending the Afghan SIV program. Yet, because of the opposition of a handful of Members, Congress, by default, could allow this program to expire in a matter of months. This would put in jeopardy the lives of thousands of Afghans who have served alongside our fighting forces.

Make no mistake, it would also jeopardize our reputation as a country that keeps its promises and stands by those who assist our missions. In past years, Senators have overwhelmingly supported the authorization of additional special immigrant visas for Afghan interpreters.

On both sides of the aisle, we have agreed that it is important to make good on our promise to these Afghan allies. But sadly, this year has been different. Several Members have objected. It is evident to me that the anti-immigration passions that have been stoked during this Presidential campaign by Donald Trump have contributed to this impasse.

The irresponsible rhetoric about immigrants is offensive to American values and it ignores what makes America great. Across nearly four centuries, immigrants have brought their energy and talents to our country, building the most successful and dynamic economy on Earth.

Our Nation has always been welcoming to immigrants. In fact, all of us here are immigrants, unless we are Native Americans. We should be especially welcoming to those who served alongside American soldiers and marines in combat and have been so essential to carrying out our mission in Afghanistan.

The Iraq and Afghan Veterans of America and other organizations representing hundreds of thousands of veterans of the U.S. Armed Forces recently addressed a letter to Members of Congress. In that letter, they respectfully but forcefully urged Congress to reauthorize the special immigrant visa program.

I want to quote from this letter, because I think it reflects the words of these American veterans:

Military service instills in a person certain values: Loyalty. Duty. Respect. Honor. In-

tegrity. . . . Breaking our word directly violates these values. Many of us can point to a moment when one of our foreign allies saved our lives—often by taking up arms against our common enemies. . . . Since our first days in boot camp, we accepted and practiced the value: “leave no one behind.” Keep our word. Don’t leave anyone behind.

If we fail to extend the SIV program, Congress will have one more opportunity and only one more opportunity this year. That opportunity will come in the session following the election.

We must seize this opportunity to do the right thing for our country and for the Afghan interpreters whose lives are at risk. We would never leave an American warrior behind on the battlefield. Likewise, we must not leave behind the Afghan interpreters who served side by side with our warriors and diplomats. We made a solemn promise to these brave people. I am going to do everything I can to ensure that we keep this promise.

I urge my colleagues, when Congress returns in November, to join me on a bipartisan basis for a program that has had bipartisan support. We can extend the Afghan Special Immigrant Visa Program. We must do that. It is in our national security interests to keep this promise that we have made.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TILLIS). Without objection, it is so ordered.

MORNING BUSINESS

Mr. LEE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate be in a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

DIXON POLICE DEPARTMENT SAFE PASSAGE INITIATIVE

Mr. DURBIN. In the last 2 years, I have spoken with so many Illinoisans about the heroin and prescription opioid epidemic. I have heard many different perspectives, including those from law enforcement, health care providers, criminal justice systems, the pharmaceutical industry, Federal oversight agencies, parents, loved ones, and recovering addicts.

I have learned that there is no town too small and no suburb too wealthy to avoid this crisis of addiction and overdose. Opioids and heroin are affecting communities all across the country.

Last November, I travelled to Dixon, IL, to learn about their work to combat the scourge of prescription opioid misuse. That is where I met chief of po-

lice Danny Langloss of the Dixon Police Department, who is leading an innovative effort with the Lee County Sheriff’s Department to address this problem.

Chief Langloss told me that the town had experienced a spike in opioid overdose deaths, which was quite uncommon for the area. As a result, the Dixon Police Department launched a new plan, one that was unconventional for law enforcement, but had proven to be effective in other parts of the country.

They started the Safe Passage Initiative, a program that promotes treatment alternatives to arrest and incarceration. The police department put the word out that, if residents suffering from addiction came forward for help and turned in their drug paraphernalia, they would be assisted in finding addiction treatment rather than being arrested, so long as they did not have outstanding warrants. This program is a model for other communities. It embodies the public health approach to this epidemic that views substance abuse as a disease and not purely a criminal matter.

Well, what has happened? Immediately after the announcement, the police department had dozens of residents come forward, asking for help. They were provided with social services and rehabilitation options. Since the program’s initiation, the Dixon Police Department has helped to place more than 100 individuals into treatment. This is quite the cause for celebration, especially in a small, rural community where it can be incredibly difficult to find open treatment slots. Months later, many of these local residents are now clean and on the path toward recovery.

What else has happened? Crime is down, and the jail cells are not nearly as full as they once were. Rather than arresting addicts for petty crimes that feed their addictions, they are being steered towards long-term help.

Today I would like to celebrate the 1-year anniversary of this program and commend the Dixon Police Department, Chief Danny Langloss, and their partners in the treatment and advocacy community who have helped to make this program a success. The program has now expanded to multiple neighboring counties, including Whiteside County and Livingston County. When we talk about this opioid epidemic and the need for all stakeholders to step up and do their part, the Safe Passage Initiative is a worthy effort that is helping to turn the tide.

Today there is a network of more than 145 police departments and 300 treatment centers that are taking this commonsense approach to addressing the opioid crisis.

It is true that real barriers remain. I know that the Dixon Police Department struggles at times to find available beds for individuals that come forward to their program. And that is why

I am working to expand access to addiction treatment by removing an old Medicaid rule, known as the IMD exclusion, which will help more people get the care they need. I am also working to increase funding for treatment centers and have succeeded in changing Federal regulations so that more individuals can receive effective treatment services.

Across our Nation, there are an average of 77 drug overdose deaths each day. In Illinois, we experienced approximately 1,700 heroin and prescription opioid overdose deaths in 2014, a 29 percent increase from 2010. With the leadership of the Dixon Police Department and the dedication of its partners, we will help make a difference for those suffering from addiction. I congratulate them on the 1-year anniversary of the Safe Passage Initiative and look forward to greater success and expansion across the State in the future.

TRIBUTE TO ROBERT JORDAN

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, Sunday, September 25 marks the end of an era. After 43 years of covering the news in Chicago, Robert Jordan will officially anchor his last newscast on "Chicago's Very Own" WGN 9. Mr. Jordan, an Atlanta native, is unique in journalism. Instead of moving from market to market, he landed with WGN in 1973 just 3 years into his career and never left the city. Outside of a 2-year stint as a Midwest correspondent for CBS, Mr. Jordan was a WGN fixture.

Mr. Jordan has enjoyed a reputation of being a serious anchor and reporter while maintaining a sense of humor for the lighter moments. Since 1995, Mr. Jordan has been coanchoring the weekend newscasts with Jackie Bange. Video of their secret handshakes during commercial breaks has gone viral, with one such clip earning more than 7 million views on YouTube.

In 2014, Mr. Jordan was named as the first journalist-in-residence for the University of Chicago's Careers in Journalism, Arts, and Media program. At the time of announcement, Mr. Jordan told an industry reporter that he was "eager to work with young journalists and help guide them at this challenging time in our profession." There is no doubt those students had a tremendous opportunity to learn from one of the best, but those students weren't the first to learn from Mr. Jordan. His daughter Karen followed in his footsteps and now is a news anchor at WLS 7 in Chicago. Mr. Jordan's son-in-law Christian Farr is a reporter at WMAQ 5, so delivering the news to millions of viewers in Chicago truly has become the family business.

Mr. Jordan's work in education was a natural fit for a man who earned a Ph.D. in philosophy of education with a minor in ethics from Loyola University

Chicago in 1999 after receiving degrees from Northeastern Illinois University and Roosevelt University.

Before he picked up a microphone, Mr. Jordan served our Nation as a surgical assistant in the U.S. Army. He continues to serve through his role on the boards of several community organizations.

With retirement providing some free time on the weekends, Mr. Jordan said he plans to go to fun events with his wife, Sharon, that he missed out on while working. He is also going to continue his work with the Greater Illinois Chapter of the Alzheimer's Association on a unique program called the Memory Preservation Project. Mr. Jordan interviews people who are newly diagnosed with Alzheimer's for the project and creates a video of cherished family memories before the wretched disease robs victims of their ability to recall events in detail. With a new person being diagnosed with Alzheimer's every 67 seconds, there are many families affected by this terrible disease.

Mr. Jordan has promised to turn up from time to time when WGN needs him to fill in for a colleague, but Sunday is truly the end of an era in Chicago journalism.

I wish a happy retirement to one of "Chicago's Very Own," Robert Jordan.

VERMONT PRIDE RETURNS AN ICONIC BUILDING HOME

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, Vermonters have long believed that the preservation of our history, from buildings to manuscripts to celebratory traditions, inform the present and future as much as they honor the past. Last month, the people of Orleans County, in Vermont's rural Northeast Kingdom, came together to restore an historic school house to its original location. What makes this story all the more remarkable is that the physical journey to return the schoolhouse was undertaken by a team of 40 oxen assembled by residents and chapters of the 4-H.

It was Alexander Twilight's vision, as headmaster of the school, to have a central school in every Vermont county that would bring together and educate Vermont's students from neighboring towns.

Born and raised in Corinth, VT, Alexander Twilight studied at Middlebury College and became the first African American known to have graduated from a U.S. college or university. An active community member, Twilight was not only an educator, but also served as a local minister and politician.

In Vermont, we take great pride in being a forward-thinking State. This progressive nature dates back to the mid-1800s, pre-American Civil War, when the town of Brownington in Orleans County was an intellectual hub in

New England. Twilight, and his beloved Orleans County Grammar School, have become a symbol of these times.

The recent move of the schoolhouse by the pulling of a team of oxen, coaxed on by area children as they walked beside the team, would surely have delighted Mr. Twilight. I ask unanimous consent that an August 2, 2016, article from The Burlington Free Press, "1823 school to move by oxen to original site," be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

[From the Burlington Free Press, Aug. 2, 2016]

1823 SCHOOL TO MOVE BY OXEN TO ORIGINAL SITE

(By Sally Pollak)

An 1823 schoolhouse will be returned to its original site Monday when 40 oxen pull the Orleans County Grammar School one-third of a mile down Hinman Settler Road in Brownington. The journey by oxen will take the school from Brownington village to a neighborhood of historic and educational significance.

The school will return to its place near the Old Stone House Museum, a four-story building that was constructed in 1836 to be the school dormitory. The granite dormitory, called Athenian Hall, was built by Alexander Twilight, who served as the school's headmaster from 1829 until a stroke in 1855. Twilight died two years later.

Twilight, who was black, grew up in Corinth and graduated from Middlebury College in 1823. He was the first African American person to graduate from a college or university in this country, according to Middlebury and other sources.

"Alexander Twilight actually imagined that this was going to become a big center of learning," said Peggy Day Gibson, director of the Old Stone House Museum. "When he built the Old Stone House as a dorm in 1836, I think he envisioned that this was the first big building. He felt that a central school, a really good institution in every county, was the way to go."

The school fell into disuse after the Civil War, the school's account book indicates. It appears the school did not operate from 1865 until 1870, Gibson said. By then, it had moved from its location at Prospect Hill into the village center, Gibson said.

"It was more convenient" to have the school in the village, Gibson said. The relocation was in keeping with a trend to decentralize education, a movement that was opposed by Twilight when he served in the Vermont Statehouse, according to Gibson.

Twilight's election to the Vermont Legislature in 1836, representing Brownington, made him the nation's first black elected official.

"Alexander Twilight thought education is better served if you have a very high quality central school," she said.

But local towns, including Barton, Craftsbury, Derby and Glover, began to establish their own schools. "One by one these towns got their own schools," Gibson said. "They took back their kids and their tax money."

STUDENTS FROM BROWNINGTON AND BEYOND

In Twilight's life, Orleans County Grammar School educated students from